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Ministry of Forests

RESEARCH FUNDING TO PROMOTE FOREST SUSTAINABILITY

PRINCE GEORGE – Government has acted on its commitment to advance science-based forestry by issuing a call for proposals to improve sustainable forest management in B.C., Minister of Forests Michael de Jong announced today.

"One of our New Era promises for sustainable forestry was investing in research to fill knowledge gaps and promote forest stewardship," de Jong said at the University of Northern British Columbia. "We are honouring that commitment to research and also focusing resources on international marketing and product development to help revitalize this province's forest economy."

The request for proposals comes from the forestry innovation investment program. The program is part of the forest investment account, a provincial program created to help ensure the future of British Columbia's forests and the people and industries that depend on them.

A total of $40 million was made available for 2002-03, including $24 million under the current request for proposals. Funding is limited by project type. Included in the Forestry Innovation Investment program's approved expenditures are:

- $20 million for applied forest research that leads to more effective policies, regulations and guidelines; enhances the value of forest land; and improves stewardship and market acceptability of B.C. forest products and practices.

- $12 million for international marketing to communicate the quality and sustainability of British Columbia's forest products to an international audience and to promote forest products in current and emerging markets.

- $8 million for product development to improve manufacturing processes, support technology transfer, develop new types or uses of forest products, and remove technical barriers to trade.

"We welcome this announcement," said Max Blouw, vice-president of research at UNBC. "Research is essential to ensure the future competitiveness of the forest industry. UNBC is eager to take part in advancing knowledge and thinking about this vitally important economic sector in B.C."

Deadlines for submissions under this request for proposals by the forestry innovation investment program vary by program area, but will be no later than Aug. 12.

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Submissions will be adjudicated and placed before advisory boards for funding recommendations.

"An open tendering process ensures that funding will be applied where it is needed most," de Jong said. " We're looking for results with an effective reach and the highest possible return on investment to B.C.."

Requests for proposals are posted at http://forestry-innovation.bc.ca on the forestry innovation investment Web site.

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1 backgrounder(s) attached.

Visit the province's Web site at http://www.gov.bc.ca/ for online information and services.